

\$3bn laser market by 2008

The world laser market will reach \$3bn by 2008, according to US market analysts Business Communications Company.

In RGB-292 *Solid State, Gas and Dye Lasers: Outlook for the Future*, it is estimated that the value of the world laser market in 2003 was just over \$2bn. With an average annual growth rate of 9.1%, BCC expects the market to be at \$3bn by 2008.

The report looks at solid-state lasers as well as gas & dye lasers. The prediction is that the

solid-state laser market will increase from \$914.1m in 2003 to \$1471.4m in '08, (an AAGR of 10%). Lamp-pumped lasers are dominant in this sector and predicted to grow at 8% AAGR to reach \$980.9m by 2008. In contrast, the market for diode-pumped solid state lasers is expected to grow at 14.8% AAGR to reach \$490.5m in 2008.

BCC reports that Nd:YAG crystals, in either a flash-lamp-pumped or diode-pumped configuration, hold from 50-65%

share of the solid-state market. Crystals such as Nd:YLF or Nd:YVO4 have a 10% share.

The rest of the market is made up by other rare-earth or transition-metal-based systems.

Despite the greater value of the gas and dye laser market, the AAGR will only be 8.4% from 2003-2008. Valued at \$1108.5m in '03, BCC forecasts the market's value at \$1657.2m in '08. Industrial application and basic research will give excimer lasers a high growth rate through to '08.

Industrial laser down 10% for 3Q '03

Industrial laser shipments for North America and US export were down approximately 10% to \$86m in the 3Q of 2003 from the same period a year earlier, according to recent research by the Laser Systems Product Group (LSPG) of the Association for Manufacturing Technology (AMT).

Shipments of laser equipment and systems within North America by the 42 companies reporting to LSPG's statistical program totalled \$65.4m during the period, while exports amounted to \$20.6m.

LSPG's report adds that shipments of CO₂ laser systems increased approximately 10%, while Nd:YAG lasers declined about 35% during the study period.

The report also found that cutting applications were the largest source of industrial laser activity, accounting for more than 55% of all shipments.

Nearly 65% of industrial lasers shipped during the quarter were CO₂ and nearly 80% of total shipments were configured as laser systems, which are

defined as a laser source and a workstation.

LSPG notes that the year-to-year percent change in CO₂ and Nd:YAG lasers only reflects contributions of firms taking part in the statistical programme in 3Q '02 and 3Q '03.

This does not include any increased shipments by new program participants in 3Q '03. "Although year-on-year shipments continue to decline, quotation activity & customer production levels seem to signal a turn around in the making," says LSPG's chairman Dave Plourde.

Jean-Jacques Dordain outlines 2004



European Space Agency Director General Jean-Jacques Dordain met with press at ESA headquarters in Paris to review the events of 2003 and to outline plans for 2004. ESA missions planned in 2004 include the launch of Rosetta to the comet Churyumov-Gerasimenko in February; the mission of ESA astronaut Andre Kuipers to the ISS in April; the Ariane 5 ECA qualification launch in June and ESA's first Earth Explorer mission Cryosat, planned for the autumn. In February, the Council will finalise the decisions relating to three new launch programmes that could not be taken in December: European Guaranteed Access to Space; Soyuz launches from Europe's spaceport in Kourou and the Future Launcher Preparatory Programme.

Markets & Business

Standards boost FWB

New standards will result in dynamic growth for Fixed Wireless Broadband (FWB), reports In-Stat/MDR. Traditionally, lack of standards has hampered the deployment of FWB systems, as the proprietary nature of FWB technology kept the cost high, and limited interoperability between different vendors.

However, the emergence of FWB-specific standards, like 802.16 and 802.20, will help to grow FWB in its three main applications - last mile connectivity, network backhaul and private networking. As a result, the market will grow from \$558.7m in 2003 to over \$1.2bn by the end of 2007.



"The need for and interest in FWB is already there, with the existence of areas that have yet to be reached by common wireline broadband technologies and those that lack basic copper infrastructure," says senior analyst, Daryl Schoolar.

"These emerging standards will merely give this market the extra boost that it has needed."

Resulting growth will come from more than just low-cost consumer/small business Internet access.

Market drivers for emerging FWB applications, such as cellular backhaul and metro Ethernet, along with private networking, will all play important roles. Web: <http://www.instat.com>